

ラブライブ!

School idol diary

~小泉花陽~

著●公野櫻子

イラスト●室田雄平

音乃夏

清瀬赤目



Translated by: Todoketomato

NOTE: Translations may not be entirely accurate (I'd wager around 85-95% accurate, and for many lines I am unsure of, I put a footnote for). I also tend to translate closer to the source than not so things like honorifics are kept since I don't believe there is a good English equivalent.

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8/23 (Update): Still not dead. Slowly but surely making progress. As mentioned before, I recently came into contact with all the SID volumes (including the holiday pair ones), so if I ever find the time, hopefully I can get them translated (expect scan quality of pics to suffer though). Would also be nice if someone has good scans they can send me to make it a little easier.

Feel free to PM me through Reddit (u/todoketomato)

01 どうしておなかがすくのかな？



1. Why do I feel hungry?

guuuuuuu---.

A low grumbling sound similar to an earth tremor.

Suddenly, a loud sound resounded from my stomach.

At first, I didn't realize what had happened.

The next moment, it hit me.

While letting out a "hya" I hunched my back.

What should I do, what should I do, what should I do----.

This is---the sound of my stomach crying out.

I quickly felt my face turning bright red.

The class that day was from when the very first period, English, had just started. In response to the sudden loud sound, I hastily pressed against my stomach and nervously looked around wondering if the people around me had noticed. My head had gone pure white and I was perfectly panicked. Why? Even though it's still the first period.

This morning, just like usual, I made sure to eat breakfast before leaving, and it's not like it was any less than usual. I was even told by my mom that since I have been eating so well recently, it was worth it to make the food. Today's side dishes were even my favorite, tamagoyaki with honey inside and accompanied with grated daikon. I even ate four pieces from the big tamagoyaki (maybe the last piece might have been just a little too much) and with a full stomach I thought "After all, mom's tamagoyaki is the most delicious in the world huh" completely satisfied ♥.

And more than all of that, no matter how much you say it's because I'm a glutton, it's still only the first period! To think I'd be hungry to this extent, what should I do?



In order to stop my stomach from being heard more than this, I bent my upper half giving me a bit of a strange posture and turned my eyes up to the blackboard to look at the back and forth between James and Lisa. The cheerful James called out [Hi, LISA] in an energetic voice and held out a tray with a set containing a large hamburger and large serving of thinly sliced fries on top.

As expected, thin fries are great, aren't they?

From the crisp edges to the soft middle of the fry where the oil just barely soaks in giving it that fluffy texture, I love it. Speaking of which, when I was young, whenever I received my allowance at the beginning of each month, I would go to fast food places and buy their French fries to the point where it felt like I would always be impatiently waiting for it. I really looked forward to it huh---is what I would think and then...

guuuuu

My stomach would cry out again



Kya--, really what should I do?!

Maybe because she sensed something wrong with me, Rin-chan, who was sitting in the front-most seat suddenly turned around and with a worried looking face—

“D-O-E-S Y-O-U-R S-T-O-M-A-C-H H-U-R-T?”

Rin-chan tried her hardest to mouth the sounds to get the meaning across and—ah
[HEY, TURN AROUND!]

With a chop, the teacher gave Rin-chan a smack on the head

Sorry, that was my fault.

Aah, at any rate really what should I do—

If I let up my posture even a little bit, there's a chance my stomach will cry out again.

I wonder, is this due to μ 's practice after all?

What should I do, someone help me—



[Kayochin's lunch is always riceballs isn't it!]

It was the break period immediately after English ended.

After sneakily coming to the empty rooftop, I decided to have just a slightly ---- no, a considerably early lunch. Sitting next to me smiling while staring at my lunchbox with her hands reaching out was Rin-chan. In a haste, I guarded my riceball and in response, Rin-chan laughed "ehehe!" and with a mischievous look on her face spun her fingers above my lunch as if saying "Which – one – should – I – choose – I – wonder?" .

[Riceballs are easy to eat and since you can also make a lunch like this super quick, they're great nya! From now on, I wonder if Kayochin would make one for Rin as well nya~☆]

While saying that, Rin glanced at my face with a face that looked like she was having fun as if to annoy me before settling her finger on the small dried plum in the far corner of the box. She then pinched the plum between her fingers and popped it into her mouth.

[--- X△X !?]

At that moment, her eyes and mouth narrowed and shut, and unable to say anything, her face puckered.

[Aa..that.. that's the ten times pickled plum that my grandma made and gave to me---- It's really sour. I'm sure for Rin-chan who likes sweet things, it's probably too sour---]

[.....S-say something like that quicker nya~....w-water...need water!]

With that, Rin-chan stood up and ran off.

[S-sorry.....]

I muttered in a small voice while looking at her back.

It looks like after all--- I'm slow.

In saying things and doing things both, with everything my timing is off and I end up too slow.

I don't know if you should say it's because I'm insensitive or dimwitted, but I can't seem to make snap decisions like Rin-chan at all. Really, I wonder why it's always like this---.



No matter when, my thoughts and emotions float around murkily in my mind so that they feel vague even to me.

Without anything concrete to hold on to, I can't begin to understand. The words that would perfectly express the inside of my mind always end up appearing right after I finally get home and walk into my room.

"Aa, at that moment, if I only I said something like this" or something like that.

Sniff.

I've become a little sad.

That's why, I popped the last piece of pickled daikon in my lunch into my mouth.

After entering my mouth, the salty taste of the daikon spread out. Aa---I want one more riceball.

After all, it would've been better if I had left even one mouthful left.

After all....this is the Hanayo who always figures out the sensible thing to do after the fact.

The roof where I sat alone.

While looking up at the clear blue sky, somehow, I felt just a little down. Even so, filling my stomach seemed to have calmed it down so I can be just a little relieved.

With this, my stomach won't growl anymore right?

If my stomach cried out in front of everyone like before, I would be so embarrassed I might really want to die---



A few hours later. After school on the rooftop.

[Then, it's decided that Kotori-chan, Maki-chan, Hanayo-chan, and I will be the ones going shopping right?]

It was the break time in μ 's after school practice. After Honoka-chan said that, the two who had been doing dance rock paper scissors (TL Note: I have no idea what this means and Google doesn't seem to know either ダンスじゃんけん) away from everyone else, Rin-chan and Nico-chan stood up at the same time.

[Eeh~ I want to go as we~!! Since you can leave the bag carrying to me, I'll go nya ☆]

[If it's popular sweets, you can leave it to Nico ♡. I'll recommend the tastiest ones. ♪]

Maki-chan placed her hands on her hips.

[Even though we're just going to buy some afternoon snacks... we don't need this many people right? In the first place, do you two understand the real reason we're going!? Today we're not going shopping for everyone's sakes but because someone said that Hanayo-chan¹ skipped lunch and looked like she was about to collapse--]

[Maki-chan---every once in a while, it's good to take a breather. Let's all go together ♡.]

Kotori-chan directed a small smile toward me.

I suddenly became embarrassed and hung my head down in shame.

Since I had an early lunch, I ended up not having anything to eat at all during our lunch period, so during μ 's afternoon practice, everyone felt sorry for me and gave me just a little bit of their lunches but --- after all, it wasn't enough.

So-sorry. Because of me, things turned out like this. I'm really no good---

While eating the snacks we bought.

The Coconut Pretz and Home Pie that Nico-chan recommended was really delicious---

[In the end, if you just ate a more proper breakfast, wouldn't it be fine?]

¹ Seems like unlike in the anime, in the SID, Maki refers to other members with "-chan" as well, not just Nico.

Maki-chan suggested.

The Hanayo Stomach Growling Counter-Measure Conference had begun.

[Yes, I also thought that but, you know, I am properly eating breakfast--- even today, I was eating until the last moment where Rin-chan came over and called me outside. It was to the point where I thought I wouldn't make it to morning practice---]

[That! I'm sure it's because Rin-chan went too early right? Without being able to eat your fill, you ended up have to leave and then without realizing it, the amount of food you ate decreased]

Maki-chan said while hitting her hand on the table.

[That's no good Rin-chan. No matter how early you get up, you mustn't hurry people while they're eating. Eating in a hurry is bad for your digestion you know? Even for the adorably round Hanayo, if you do that, I'm sure that she'll grow thin in no time----]

[Eeh—but, this morning as well Kayochin was having seconds you know? Right, Kayochin?]

[Eh?]

The troubled Maki-chan. My face turned bright red and I started fidgeting nervously.

[Tha-that's right --- actually today as well the furikake gohan was so tasty I ended up getting seconds, so I was later than usual. Um..uh..that's why..]

A silence fell over the others.

[So even though you had seconds as early as breakfast, your stomach still cried out in the very first period, right!]

Umi-chan said as if she was impressed while I made myself smaller and smaller.

Uwa~n, what should I do? Am I strange after all?

What should I do?

Maybe my stomach has something off about it after all----.

Trying to bring the conversation back, Maki-chan said

[But, anyway, since your stomach crying out is just a result of peristalsis movements occurring due to hunger, the only way to deal with it is eating something]

Kotori-chan also chimed in.

[Ah, then--- from here on everyone could prepare just a bit more for their lunches so if Hanayo-chan gets hungry, we could give her some of ours like we did today? If it's like that, even if she has an early lunch like today, we could deal with it I think]

Inadvertently, the image of that popped up in my head.

“Woof woof, I want to eat everyone's lunch, want to eat --- woof woof”

Somehow, it's like I'm a hungry puppy.

No way, somehow after imagining it, I've become pretty depressed---*dejected*.



[Well, Hanayo-chan is still a first year and among all of us, she's also growing the most. There's no helping it ♡]

Nozomi-chan stealthily grabbed my bust and Nico-chan as well, with a "u~un" crossed her arms and said

[If you don't at least eat that much, you won't be able to get breasts like that, huh. I was still naïve after all----]

Um, that's not—

[I'll cooperate as well nya! From here on out, I've decided to absolutely stop snatching food from Kayochin's lunch nya!!]

To the jumping Rin-chan, Eri-chan responded with a bitter smile.

[You were swiping food from someone's early lunch!? As expected of Rin----Ah, I have bread for lunch fairly often so it's quite easy to share, okay?]

[Ah, in that case, I will also bring the leftover manjuu from the family store! Actually, I've been bringing them everyday but Umi-chan and Maki-chan and the others said they were tired of

them so they refrained from taking any. If Hanayo-chan, who is always enjoying her food, eats it, I'm sure my granny will be happy as well!]

The smiling Honoka-chan said with a “Eheheh♡” while scratching her head.

When I see her smiling face like that---

When I am filled with everyone's kind words.

I thought.

“Woof woof”

It's no good to just rely on everyone like this.

For something like this, I should more properly think of a solution myself. As a member of μ's, so as to not be embarrassed, I have to work out something myself!

I stood up and said.

[Everyone, thank you. But I can't only cause trouble for you all. From tomorrow on, I will definitely give it my best to deal with this. Thanks to everyone, I thought of an idea while listening to the conversation---]

The idea that I suddenly thought of.

After saying this with all my might.

[Oooooo~!!]

Everyone cheered. Ehehe ♡. I feel just a little embarrassed---



That night.

gurgle---*bubble* *bubble*

From the rice cooker in the kitchen came the sound of steam flowing out and the sound of rice in a pot simmering.

And with it the wonderful smell of warm, steamy rice drifted in the air.

Uwaa, just thinking about it is making me drool a little!

In the kitchen, I gave a complacent smile while gazing at the timer of the rice cooker which was soon to finish.

From the time I finished my lunch early after first period today til now---the rice I was patiently waiting for the entire day ♡.

I had a little of everyone's side dishes in the afternoon though.

Also, I did have the sweets that I ate with everyone after school as well.
But---after all rice is the best. I absolutely love it.
White rice.



Even though I'm always worried that I eat too much and will get fat..but even Eli-chan frequently tells me "Since you're a growing child, normally it's better to eat more. Even for me, I eat whatever I want without minding it" (Actually, Eli-chan is the type of person who looks pretty eating anything ♪). Besides, what did people say today --- The Hanayo without lunch is really pitiful! (TL Note: Unsure on last line それになんていったって、今日は----昼ごはん抜きだった花陽なんだから)

For today only, it should be fine to eat with all my strength right?

Aa, I have to get ready soon!

For freshly cooked rice, there is one thing I think goes best with it ----- Kombu. Sesame or shiso is fine as well but, kombu with just a little bit of soy sauce to make it not too sweet is the best. It's been my favorite since I was a kid.

If it's freshly cooked, steamy rice, rather than onigiri, the gentle fluffy rice served in a rice bowl...the first bite with kombu added right in the middle.

Aaaaa---I'm sure with just that it would be pure bliss ♡ (TL Note: Unsure about this line, but it should be around that meaning きっともうそれだけでごはん一杯はささっといけそうな気がしちゃう)

It feels like my stomach is going to rumble again.

Patience, patience. Just 9 more minutes.

At any rate, why am I this hungry I wonder?

This morning really was embarrassing.

At practice after school today, after Maki-chan gave me that lecture, I tried looking up what she said.

The “peristalsis movements” that Maki-chan mentioned. It seems that your empty stomach and gut move and rumble and cry out as a result of hunger. Then, in order to not let that happen, I have to properly eat food after all, right?

After I joined μ's, because of all the singing and dancing it might be the first time since I was born that I moved my body this much. That might be causing me to get hungry quicker after all.

Uun—how troublesome. What should I do?



At that time, I thought of this and that.

And then the idea that I told everyone.

That is, from tomorrow on, I would ask my mom to prepare 2 lunches in the morning.

One is actually for lunch. And the other is for if, and only if, my stomach is empty and starts rumbling again. For a girl to carry two lunches is really really embarrassing but – but, it's better than your stomach starting to rumble in class like "guu guu" right?

My bag was just a little heavier than usual.

But, this weight---is the source of my energy in order to give my best for μ 's ♡. If it's for the sake of μ 's something like my bag being heavier is nothing at all!

Comments♡ Maki

I didn't think she'd bring 2 boxes --- as expected of Hanayo-chan huh.... On the other hand, since I would never be able to eat that much I might actually respect that a little. But, the smiling face of Hanayo-chan who says "I'm hungry~" while looking at onigiri and other snacks is really lively. Since that smile gives off the feeling of an idol the most, you could say that's Hanayo-chan's charm. It would be nice if Otonoki had a cafeteria as well, ah, but if that happened, it would be easier to get fa--no, it's nothing ♡. Eat a lot and grow a lot, Hanayo-chan!



02 アイドルは遠い星☆



2. Idols Are Distant Stars☆ (Part 1)

Since I was little, I've always loved idols.

Ah, but, rather than a feeling of yearning ---it was more that I just liked them.

Fluttery, fluffy, twirling, and glittery².

When I saw them singing and dancing on TV, words like that would fill up my head. Somehow I always became happy watching them.

The pink, yellow, and sky-blue pastel colors.

The cute heart and star decorated checkered clothing with ribbons.

Really just by watching it, I became cheerful and have so much fun, and I would get this feeling of excitement in my chest.

Somewhere deep inside I would get the drive to do something.

Since it's the stupid me we're talking about, when I tried to mimic their dancing on a whim, I ended up failing completely. Even still, just a little ---- just a little bit. My legs moved.

The evening broadcast.

My body swayed together with the rhythm that flowed out of the TV's speakers---just a little.

"Just a little" I thought, and I tried standing in front of the mirror.

I shortened the skirt I was wearing and tucked in my stomach.

Then I put on my prized scrunchy with a ribbon on my wrist.

I taped the flower-adorned ribbon I got as a birthday present to my headband.

Since I planned to have a microphone as well, I had to prepare that.

I tried making a glowing smiling face.

And then I tried singing in a small voice.

A voice that surprised even me, faint and flaky - a shaking voice.

"Uwa, that was terrible" I would think, but I'd try to build up a little more courage. I tried using a louder voice.

Those sparkles and fluffiness from those idols would appear in my mind.

I planned on becoming -- an idol.

Just for now. Even for me, if I put on this ribbon and smile like this, right, just a little I'd sparkle like those idols---.

While thinking that, right in the middle of taking a deep breath.

[Hanayo-chan, are you there?]

² In the original, these are actually all Japanese onomatopoeia that correspond roughly to the words listed Japan has a ton of onomatopoeia that simply don't exist in English so this was difficult to translate

At the door to the living room was my mom .

Aa---.

While taking off the headband on my head in a hurry, I searched for the TV remote in a fluster.

[How cute♡]

My mom, having just gotten back from work, put down her bags while at the same time making a happy-looking smiling face.

[Like that, Hanayo-chan really looks like an idol, huh? ♡]

My grinning mother, who kept rubbing my head and calling me super cute, while looking at the figures of the idol group singing the ending song on the still airing TV program said.

[Do you like idols too?]

I was embarrassed but -- but I became just a little happy with that.

The fact that mom called me cute and didn't make fun of me, and also the meaning of the "too" at the end quickly became apparent. "Maybe, does my mom like idols too?" I thought.

While I sat there with my heart pounding staying silent, my mom stared hard at the idols on the TV dancing and then said

[Your mom did something like these dancing idols a long time ago too you know?]



Eh, eh, EH, EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEH-----!?

Even though I was still a third grader at that time.

That was the biggest shock I ever received in my life up to that point.

Mom was an idol ----- to think she was one of those sparkly, fluffy, fluttery, twirly idols ----- I had a hard time believing it.

The mom that makes pure white rice and miso soup every morning for me was an idol---

The story I heard from mom went like this.

My mom liked songs from when she was young and was also good at singing.

Just by singing, she would get praised by everyone.

Little by little, her dream of becoming a singer sprouted.

"I want to become an idol singer". While holding those feelings, during spring when she was 15, my mother had the opportunity to take an audition where if she passed with flying colors it'd be her debut! At least that would've happened but unfortunately, she wasn't able to do it. Although she failed to get chosen for the audition, as one of the remaining contenders at the last round, she was hired as a trainee (TL Note: Pretty sure this is right idea, but not sure about specifics (trainee's literal translation is "research student"))

If that was the case, if she kept it up for a few more years, she should've been able to debut.

But while going to and fro between school and the entertainment agency, right before she became 17, she happened to meet a very cool and handsome man ---- my dad.

[If I hadn't met with your dad then, I'm sure your mother would be on the TV as well doing something like this, maybe --- hehe]

My mother who said that while smiling nostalgically somehow looked very happy with her eyes sparkling.

That appearance was just like the look of a girl in school secretly telling the name of the guy she liked to her fellow classmates.

"Somehow she looks really happy" I thought.

For me, things like love are way, way too early. Although I don't really understand it at all --- my heart started beating just a little.

It was the first story I heard about my mother from when she was young.

To think she was an idol trainee for a while, I had absolutely no idea but that's amazing!

But to think she ended up giving up on it, somehow that seems like a huge waste...

But, because my mom didn't become an idol, I was born, right? Maybe, if my mom had decided to become an idol instead, I wonder if I would never have been born into this world?

I wonder, doesn't mom have any regrets because she gave up her dream of being an idol? No, maybe, even now, she might be thinking something like that.

"If only your father and Hanayo weren't around."

I got a little scared, and when I looked up at my mom's face with upturned eyes, my mom stroked my head gently.

[That's why, I'm sure the reason Hanayo likes idols so much is because you inherited from your mother. If it's Hanayo-chan, since you're so terribly cute, I think you would definitely be able to become an idol!]

I was told that by my mother.

[Because of dad and me, you couldn't become an idol. Do you still regret that even now?]

I tried asking that softly, and my mother's eyes went round and she burst out laughing.

[No way, something like that, your mother has been given such a wonderful husband and cute, angelic daughter. I am the happiest person in the world ♪ I'm sure I'm happier than any famous idol. Just---]

Just?

[Just, you know, since the baby I gave birth too was just so cute, the truth is that when Hanayo was a baby your mother felt just a small longing for her past aspirations and so your mother registered you as a baby model at an entertainment agency]

[Eeeeeh!?!]

Another huge shock.

[A baby model~!?!]



The flower-decorated ribbon I was holding fell out from my hands. That kind of me, I never heard anything about that~!!!!

[Hm? Did I never show it to you?]

Saying that, my mother pulled out an old photo album of me.

At the very end, interleaved between the pages, was some kind of pamphlet?

[This, this is me when I was a tiny baby]

[That's right. Cute, right?]

The thing my mother pulled out filled with pride was a pamphlet for toothbrushes for babies.

It's a picture I've seen around the house. A baby Hanayo was holding a small toothbrush while smiling and drooling a little.

[Hanayo-chan, your teeth starting crowning early, so they accepted this easily ♪ But at that time pictures took a lot longer to take and the studio was dusty. It wasn't really a good environment for a baby to be in so your father was against it----]

Mom pouted with a slightly disappointed face.

[In the end, it ended with just that. Your father said that since you were so cute, there was no helping it --- that's right, Hanayo-chan, if you like idols then why don't you try aiming to be one

yourself? My daughter Hanayo-chan is the cutest thing in the world so you would definitely be able to become one!]

From a baby model to an idol trainee.

The Hanayo from back then was busy trying to process all the new information and was so surprised and confused that just hearing those words took everything she had.

The words from my mom who is always kind.

Of course, even for me, it wasn't like I would start seriously trying to become one in reality just from that.

But the talk from that time left a very strong impression in my mind.

From that day on, somehow, the idols on TV who were so far, far away before seemed to become a lot closer.

If mom could become a trainee, then maybe...

Maybe... even for me, there might be a real chance---

That was just like...

Something even farther than a dream.

It was as if the idols that seemed like they were in a different world became close enough that I could touch them.

Comments♡Nico

To think Hanayo-chan's mom was an idol in training, amazing! Hanayo-chan was actually a second-generation idol!! That's a huge deal~, recently there have been a lot of second-generation performers. Just by being a second generation, you have a good conversation topic, connections, and a starting dash laid out for you. Hanayo-chan was actually a baby model as well ---- Grr! What a waste!!! Alright, the next time we go Hanayo-chan's house to play, I'll try asking her mom about her office and all sorts of things ♪ The connections I don't have I'll make up for with hard work ♡



³ Nico actually intersperses “Nico” throughout most of her sentences. I think this also occurs in the anime so it should be nothing new. I chose to leave it out since it sounds really, really awkward in English. Also, “starting dash” was literally “start dash” in katakana in the original

03 アイドルは遠い星☆(つづき)



3. Idols are distant stars ☆ (Part 2)

[Um, Rin-chan, I want this to absolutely be a secret---]

To the me that prefaced what I was about to say with that, Rin-chan grinned with her usual carefree smile.

[Got it, I'll definitely keep it a secret!]

She responded cheerfully.

That's why.

[Well.. yesterday I heard an amazing story!]

In the third years classroom at Otonokizaki Elementary School, I began to tell my story to my childhood friend and classmate who I was good terms with, Rin-chan. Of course, I was a little embarrassed, but I felt that no matter what, I couldn't keep this story to myself.

That in the past, my mom was an idol in training.

And that I was a baby model in the past.

It was both surprising and exhilarating.

It could be that becoming an idol was closer than I thought.

When I thought that, my heart would speed up for some reason.

Those distant stars shining far away---

Maybe, I might be able to see them up close soon.

When I thought that, before I knew it, the words spilled out of my mouth.

[Um, you know, since mom had a chance to become an idol, m-maybe --- I, can become an i-idol too---]

I desperately tried to cover up my voice slowly becoming quieter and quieter. I mustered up my strength.

I was a little hesitant to say it. *gulp*

I swallowed my saliva.

[U-um, maybe, if I give my best, I might be able to aim to become something like an idol I wonder---something like that?]

To the me who tried with all her effort to say that as casually as possible. Rin-chan responded

[Yeah, you can definitely become one!! Kayochin is suuuuper cute! If you become an idol, I will definitely support you.]

Smiling with her usual grinning face was Rin-chan.

In a way, I felt it was a bit anticlimactic, but it did help me gain some self-confidence. It was a strange feeling.

If she can say it as simply as that ---- then I guess at the very least it's not as strange as I thought? (TL: Unsure about latter half. せめて思うくらいならおかしくはないということなのかな?)

Since I never had any confidence in myself, I had always convinced myself that there was no way.

That's right... at the very least, it might me good to try challenging it normally.

After all, the idols that appear on TV, of course they're really cute but somehow they're kind of normal, or rather, it's hard to say that they aren't normal people. They don't wear the kinds of amazing dresses and jewelry that adult actresses would wear, and they don't put on showy clothes like you'd see on a stylish singer.

When you see them on commercials, somehow, while wearing lovely outfits, they do relatively normal things like eat ice cream or bite into chocolate. If in the beginning, everyone was a normal person like my mom...

If that's the case, then even for me, that I definitely wouldn't be able to do it is --- Aaaah, maybe its impossible for me after all



[At any rate, an idol huh. I don't really have any interest at all in that, or rather it's more that if it's me, then the transforming hero of justice, Kamen Rider is better I think. But if it's Kayochin, I think you could definitely become one since you're cute nya ☆]

That's why when Rin-chan said it again ---- I was really happy.

[Then, I've never done anything like dancing before, so I'm thinking maybe I should try practicing from now on?]

Right when I finished saying that, Rin-chan sprung up and said

[If it's dance practice, then I want to try too! That's right, then why don't I try aiming to be an idol as well together with you nya? A 2 person idol group of childhood friends. With the two of us dancing, I'm sure it'd be fun nya ~]

[Uwa-wawawa, your voice is too loud---]

The suddenly dancing Rin-chan.

Amazing ---- she can already dance to the tune for the dance of that idol group that the two of us saw before

[I've seen it around 2 times already, so let's dance together nya~ ♪]

2 times... just by watching... and she can completely dance to it?

While I was frozen up, the classmates who were around the dancing Rin-chan started gathering around.

[Rin-chan, Hanayo-chan, what are you doing~?]

[Practice to become an idol with Kayochin nya ☆]

Aa, Rin-chan, if you say that --- we'll be laughed at by everyone.

Something like "There's no way someone like Hanayo could become an idol"

While thinking that and turning red, I covered my ears with my hand when I suddenly heard "Uwaa" and sounds of joy from everyone.

[That's amazing!]

[Sounds fun!]

[I want to do it too~]

With that as a start.

From that day onward, our class awoke to an idol boom

[Then.. I'll be the center right!]

[I want to sing the climax of the song~]

[Then, I'll do the jump♡]

When break time came, all the girls gathered in a corner of the courtyard and everyone decided on their parts.

Miniskirts with frills, hair adorned with ribbons.

Everyone threw out ideas and styles as they pleased. The girls from Otonokizaka third grade who attended school at the same time.

My position was always on the outskirts of this group.

Rin-chan kept saying that since I was the one that brought it up, I should have been in the center, but I didn't have the confidence to do that, and in the first place, I was the worst at dancing, so it would really be best if I was on the side watching everyone's dance. I can't dance at all after all ---.



That's right.

I became afraid of what I realized within the idol boom of Otonokizaka Grade 3 Class 1.

After all.

Hanayo is---

Hanayo is---

Terrible at dancing.

sniff

It was from around that time that I realized that I was a little slow.

After all, I definitely couldn't spin around horizontal bars ⁴ , I was last at jump roping, and when it came to the vaulting horse, I would always be blanky staring at the model student, Rin-chan while I was always at the lowest level group.

That's why I already knew I had slow reflexes, but if it was the fun-looking dances that the idols on TV did... if it was the sparkling, fluffy, and twirly dances...even if it was me, I was sure I'd be able to do it normally is what I thought.

⁴ This. <http://www.sakaagari-kotsu.com/img/sakaagari.png>

I didn't have any basis for it but ---- somehow it'd work.

I loved it after all.

I had a lot of things that I was pretty bad at, but there was no way there was that big of a difference between me and everyone else, is what I thought.

I was still small and in a peaceful time (TL: No idea about "peaceful time". 平和だった時代の花陽).

Since I was still ignorant to the rest of the world, I thought that, but in reality---

Everyone being able to dance to it so simply was a mystery to me.

Even though no one taught them, why could they suddenly do it? I tried asking.

"Hm? Just by looking at them on TV normally, you'd be able to do it right?" is what they'd say, and conversely, I'd receive a blank look of confusion.

I wasn't able to say anything in response.

For me... for me ---- I can't do that. Just by looking is impossible.

I can't dance naturally to that extent.

For me, I thought that dancing was something that was more like a practice with a strict way of doing it----

If I forcibly tried to match everyone's movement, I would be laughed at by everyone.

"What's with that dancing? Hanayo-chan, you're so funny" they'd say.

Rin-chan would say something like [Kayo-chin's dance is very like Kayo-chin. It's cute nya~] though.

I ---- after that, I withdrew from lining up with everyone else and dancing since it was embarrassing.

I quickly turned into a spectator.

Eeen! Sorry!

Geez Hanayo, even though you're this bad at dancing, to think you wanted to become an idol.

While thinking that, the Hanayo from that day felt like crying.





When I think about it now, I'm sure it was from that point.

I slowly came to understand about myself.

It was the first time I came to understand the world of adults, just a little.

It was the day I came to the realization that the world I knew and the world in reality might be somewhat different.

It was the day that the fact that there were a lot of things I just couldn't do by myself was thrust at me.

From that day onward----

I realized that there might be all kinds of hidden pitfalls in the world.

I became afraid of walking while facing forward.

If I'm going to be walking, then I should do it slowly while looking down with caution---

I started thinking like that.

For me, idols once again became those far, far stars in the universe far beyond everything else that I could never reach.

If I look down while walking, I wouldn't be able to reach the things I could see right in front ----
the sparkling star shining brightly above

But, now--.

While facing that star, I've slowly began to walk just a little toward it.

That day.

When μ 's was just forming and was still in its early stages, when Honoka-chan invited me as if it were completely natural.

Even though I really wanted to try it, unconsciously I would always hesitate and think "Someone like me couldn't." Honoka-chan looked straight at that kind of me and invited me.

"You're just doing what you want to do. Something like qualifications doesn't matter at all." is what she taught me.

I was strung along with that Honoka-chan.

I was pulled by Rin-chan.

And my back was pushed by Maki-chan.

Now, together with my 8 beloved friends --- I feel like we are standing atop that distant star floating in space.

Fluffy, sparkly, twirly, glittery.



And while aiming for even brighter stars in space, now I can feel my legs starting to move.

Now, if I could meet the elementary school 3rd year Hanayo from that time, I'd like to tell her this.

It's good to know yourself.

But, just because you can't do it, it's too boring to switch to the audience seat.

If there's something you can't do --- then you should just ask.

If there's something you want to do, then you can't give up before even trying to do it.

I always, always absentmindedly stared at that far star while thinking that I could never do it.

Once I took a bold step forward ---- look.

After all, right now, even from the top of this small, far star, the view is this beautiful. It's amazing.

If the Hanayo from a long time ago saw me, would she think I was an alien?

Haha.

Even if I say so myself, somehow it's turned into something amazing⁵ hasn't it ♡

But you know, the me right now shining brightly is having the most fun and is the happiest I've ever been.

It isn't just a happiness from reaching my goal.

It's hard to believe I can be this happy just from taking a step forward.

Thank you everyone for teaching me this ---- ♡

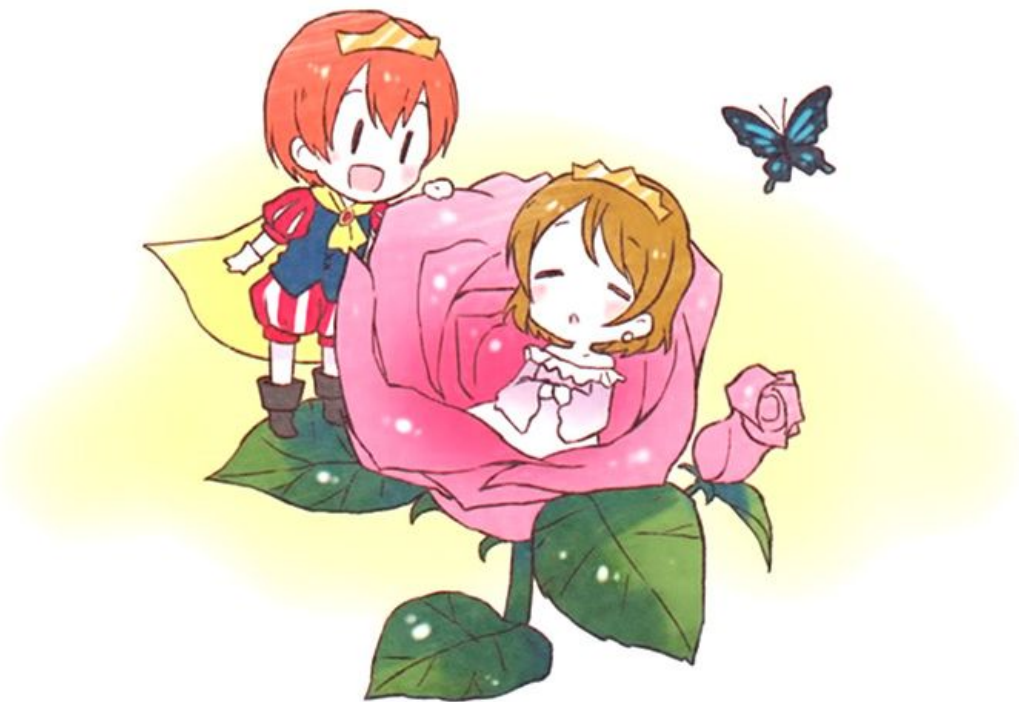
⁵ The word used here (不思議) actually means something more of "miracle" or "mysterious" but that sounded too weird so I left it as "amazing"

Comments♡ Honoka

Hmm~, Hanayo-chan's grade had an idol boom, huh ♡
Probably, around that time, I think I was playing outside every day playing something like tag or dodgeball ----
tehehe♪ While it's true I brought up the idea of μ's, I think it was because members like Hanayo-chan, Nico-chan, or Kotori-chan, people who knew actually knew about idols in detail, were there that it's gone this well. Even though every day for me is also one failure after another, I'm living on while not getting discouraged! From here on out too, let's give it our best, Hanayo-chan ♡



04 小さな花。



4. Small Flowers

Even though summer was about to end, it seemed as if the sun, which abruptly returned, was reluctant to leave.

It was one of those boiling hot days where the sun blazed down with an intense heat.

I had just finished eating breakfast and glanced at the sky.

It's already been 3 days since it last rained---

I realized that.

[I'm sure the anemone in the flowerbed of our school's courtyard are parched]

I quietly muttered and stood up.

It was morning, and I changed into a T-shirt and shorts.

After picking up a pocket bag and putting on a hat to block the sun, I was ready to go.

It's nice how easy getting ready in summer is, isn't it ♡

After saying “I’m off” to my grandma who was watching TV in one of the inner rooms of our Japanese-style house, I left the house.

My house has five people: my grandpa, grandma, dad, mom, and me

My grandma is the only one who doesn’t work, but since she goes to a calisthenics class and senior citizen meetings (老人会) with her friends she is pretty busy, so surprisingly, it’s a house where it isn’t rare for no one to be in during the day.

Actually, if it’s this heat, even my grandma would be troubled going out.

With one step out, I felt air so hot I let out a “waa”

It was like a sauna.

While thinking that it was like summer had hit again, I continued walking alone at a steady pace.

Ah, I can already see it.

The big signboard on the gatepost.

Chiyoda’s Otonokizaka Elementary----.

It was a splendid bronze signboard written on with a brush. I was slightly happy that it hadn’t been taken off yet.

This is my alma mater.

Since Chiyoda is in the center of the city, the donut effect⁶ has lead to major urban development in the area and less residents. This combined with declining birthrates meant the number of children was slowly decreasing. Around the time I was in elementary school, it was already at the level where all the grades together would only be one class⁷.

3 years after that, after everyone and I graduated just last year, it was finally decided that it would be a candidate for a plan to consolidate it with the elementary school from the neighboring prefecture. It seems like around now, the investigation for the plan is advancing quietly.

There were always rumors about it, so I was prepared for it to happen, but if your elementary school was going to disappear ---- after all, it’s sad.

It’s something that made me think.

⁶ <https://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/ドーナツ化現象>

⁷ Not sure if this is saying “All the grades would be in one class” or “Every grade would have one class”

Maybe, some years down the road, there will come a day where the school I'm attending now, Otonokizaka Academy, may really become just an empty school building.

No no, I mustn't think like that!

Right now, in order to protect Otonokizaka, I'm giving it my best with all my effort every day like this with μ's----

I'm pretty slow and am mostly being pulled along by the others though.

Tehehe---

Under the summer sky, with a "fuu", I woke up from my daydream and when I looked up, the same old building for Otonokizaka Elementary School was standing there

The school campus devoid of people for summer break somehow gave off a strange atmosphere.

The schoolyard which was all dried up and grey since it hadn't rained for however many days was truly silent.

Far away, you could hear just a little bit of the cicadas chirping.

The schoolyard where we played a lot, exercised too, and also in that corner --- that's where Rin-chan and our other friends chatted about all sorts of things

I went toward the flower bed near the empty bird pen⁸ on the western outskirts of campus.

[Wow --- they're wilting. Seems like it's really hot!]

While thinking that it was a good thing I came, I went to look for the hose which should've been behind the bird pen.

What was planted in the flower bed were groups of small flowers with thin stems and small firm buds swelling which had grown quite a bit since fall⁹

You know, these are the flowers I planted back when I was in my 6th year¹⁰

Even though in the past, there used to be a lot of flowers in it, since the number of students has declined, it had already become just a plot of dirt with all but one small part being unused.

In my lower years, I raised morning glories and mini-tomatoes, and in middle school, I made a wall of vines with bitter melons and also raised eggplants. When I became a high schooler, I tried experimenting with potatoes and using them for cooking practice. Even though I was in its

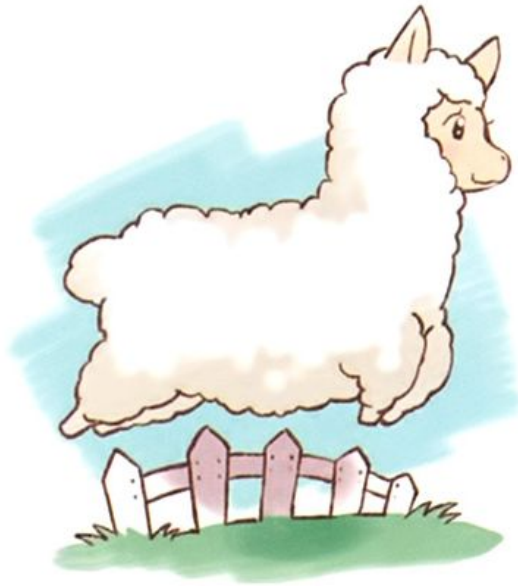
⁸ 鳥小屋. Birdhouse?

⁹ Not too sure about the "since fall" part. 秋に向けてもうずいぶん背を伸ばしてきた

¹⁰ Japanese elementary schools go up to 6 years.

care for quite some time, at some point, this flowerbed became pretty empty. After all, it's pretty sad --- all that was left were the anemone that were planted¹¹

Since my grandma likes gardening, she has raised a variety of things but, within those, the things she plants the most are white or pink or light purple, all kinds of anemone.



If I really think about it, since anemone are a robust plant, it makes sense that my grandma's garden would have that many. Before I knew it, even after I graduated Otonokizaka Elementary, the anemone had taken root and the tidy, cute flowers were there every year.

It isn't a flower that requires a lot of maintenance..

While growing, just like morning glories and tomatoes, you don't have to water them every day.

They can grow fine just with the water from rain.

That's why normally, I unapologetically leave them as is.

But, just in this blazing hot and dry summer.

In this summer where all the people are gone on a long break.

After all, it bothers me a little.

I planted them myself after all.

¹¹ Extremely unsure about this translation. This long paragraph seemed to end with just mentioning anemone, so this is how I interpreted it こっそり植えたおばあちゃんのシュウメイギク

If I don't give them water, it'll become all parched up and dry and then it might end up withering away.

Right now, since it's summer, the number of people going in and out have decreased a lot.

Since it already took root after that much effort, if there is no one to care for it and it dries up and dies, they'd be way too pitiful..

While feeling the sweat under my hat, I twisted open the water faucet to let out water and ---
wah it's hot!

Today really is hot, isn't it. If I poured this in a bucket, at this rate, it seems like it could become a bath.

How nice.

I want to become tiny and swim in a bath made out of a bucket like this.

A small, small Hanayo frog.

Floating around as if I was in the world of Thumbelina.



Something like that. While thinking about that and drawing water,
[Kyaaaaaa!]

I accidentally stepped on the hose, squashed it, and got myself completely soaked with water.

My white shirt got wet and it's sticking and clinging to my body.

Uwaa, what should I do ---.

Right when I was thinking that.

[Hanayo.....chan?]

I heard a voice from behind.

When I turned around I saw --- a pretty person wearing a pure white, sleeveless one piece and a wide, white hat that matched the summer sky really well.

[Kotori-chan!!]

She gave off a completely different atmosphere from the school uniform appearance I was used to seeing at school, and she was wearing a white summer dress that someone like me wouldn't look good in that made her seem so mature, and like a princess, and pretty, and beautiful, and amazing, and white --- Aaaaa, I don't even know what I'm saying anymore but, anyway!

Seeing a super pretty older sister-like person suddenly, I was surprised.

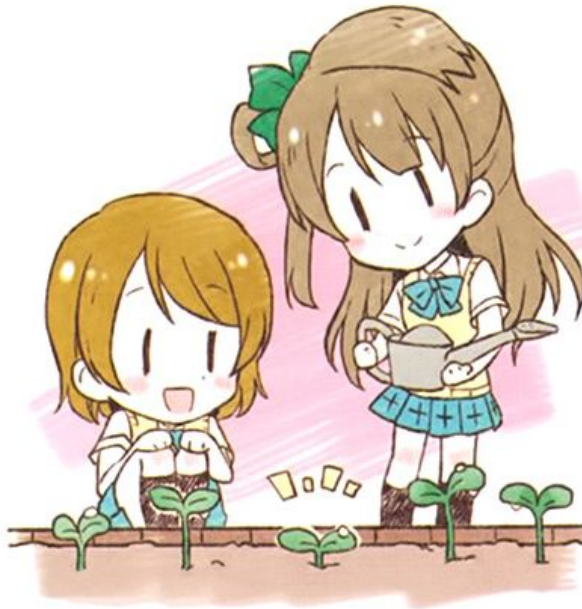
My mouth was hanging wide open. Kotori-chan giggled while looking at me like that.

[Hanayo-chan, what are you doing today in a place like this?]

[Aaaaah, uhh, I, I was giving wat-]

Since a long time ago, whenever I get nervous, my mouth never seems to work right. While talking, I started sweating again.

The T-shirt sticking to my body feels terrible---.



[Were you watering the flowers here?]

Since Kotori-chan said that with surprise, I became a little embarrassed.

Somehow--- I wondered if it was a little shameless

I've already graduated a long time ago and yet here I am entering and leaving as I please doing something like watering flowers ---.

[Um, since it was summer I figured there wouldn't be anyone to water the flowers, and these flowers are the ones I cared for back in my 6th year, and they were blooming for me when I graduated, so somehow I couldn't leave them alone, which is why I ended up coming here like this on my own even though it might not be allowed, but at the very least I'd come water these flowers until the day they naturally wither is what I thought---]

[Hanayo-chan sure is kind, isn't she?]

My heartbeat sped up. What should I do? Somehow, Kotori-chan really seems like an older sister.

I'm an only child, so I've always, always wanted a kind, pretty older sister---

Like that, I suddenly felt pretty happy.

"O, ne, e, chan--"¹²

I whispered in a soft voice no one would hear.

¹² "Older sister". Yeah, not going to bother translating this to an English equivalent since it just sounds awkward.

Muttering it to myself, “one more time” I thought and became nervous¹³

At that moment.

shaa. I noticed a sound.

Ah, now that I think about it, the water was still running---

By the time I remembered, it was already too late.

[Kyaaaaaaaaaaa! Kotori-chan, the water is spraying all over your skirt~!!]

At some point, it looks like I stepped on the hose again

The shower head slipped off, and the water was gushing out from the base---

In my surprise, I jumped up in a fluster which caused the still-running hose to start flying around unnecessarily.

Kyaa~! Kyaaaaaaaaaaa!!!

The sound of Kotori-chan and my overlapping voices.

With both of us splashing around avoiding the water, I finally managed to twist the faucet closed.

Everything was flooded.

Kotori-chan and I were soaked wet dripping water from the head down---

[So-sorry---]

While I was feeling depressed and down-hearted, Kotori-chan gently rubbed my head and consoled me saying that I shouldn't mind it so much and it wasn't like there was anyone nearby anyway.

¹³ 口の中でつぶやきかけてもう一回、ドキッとする。Unsure about this line



She really is like a gentle older sister---. Even though it was because of my clumsiness that she got sprayed and soaked, Kotori-chan said with a smile

[On a campus with no one there, you came here just to water the plants. You're a good person, Hanayo-chan. It'd be nice if I had such a kind younger sister]

Awawa, what should I do, what I was thinking, I wonder if Kotori-chan heard that somehow---. I went bright red in embarrassment and become unable to say anything.

[Ah, see, look, it's a rainbow]

Right where Kotori-chan was pointing, there was a small rainbow above a puddle.

[Ah---]

It's because of all the water that got splashed everywhere earlier.

[I'm sure it's your reward for being such a hard worker, Hanayo-chan]

Kotori-chan, who said that while smiling, seemed more than just an older sister. Standing in the glittering rainbow, it was almost as if she was an angel from the heavens----.

I was charmed by that scene and stood there with my mouth wide open again.

At that moment, from the school's shed

[Kotori-onee-chan]

I heard the voice of several kids coming closer

Ahh, I see --- Today was the day Kotori-chan was volunteering and helping out the Otonoki Children's Chorus. That finally explains why she's here today.

Kotori-chan wasn't here to be my older sister but instead she was actually being a gentle older sister to these kids---.

I see.

Then, I'll have to save the time where she can be my older sister for a different time! Is what I decided.

After that, with Kotori-chan by my side, I went back to watering the anemone with plenty of water. In the meantime, we talked about our memories at Otonoki Elementary.

Aside from me and Rin-chan, there's Kotori-chan, Honoka-chan, Umi-chan, Eli-chan --- Otonoki Elementary has taken care of plenty of members of μ's,

That's why I'm sure Otonoki Elementary has to be a place full of very nostalgic, precious memories for everyone. I'm sure of it.

[Thanks to you, this schools become a place brimming with flowers. I'm sure the school is happy with it too]

I could see Kotori-chan from the side dripping with water, sparkling in the light and gazing at the flowers, giving off a beautiful image.

[It'd be good if Otonoki Elementary continued like this forever and ever, just like this --- with the flowers continuing to bloom]

When Kotori-chan said that, I brightened up all at once.

[I'll definitely continue to protect these flowers, so leave it to me!]

Somehow with some confidence, I said that without thinking.

Kyaa --- how embarrassing.

But you know, this is about the only thing I can do.

Even though it's only common, plain, small flowers with nothing like these anemone¹⁴

On days with sun and days with rain

In days in summer and days in winter, always -- just thinking that those flowers are blooming here.

¹⁴ Unsure about this line. 花陽は、このシュウメイギクみたいになりふれた、地味で小さななんでもない花だけど

Just a little, it'd be nice if these small flowers become a source of warmth and happiness for everyone, something like that.

I entertained that thought for a while---



Comments♡Kotori

Since I'm also an only child, I've always thought it'd be nice to have a cute younger sister ♡ That's why, if by some chance I actually got a kind, cute sister like Hanayo-chan, I'd be really, really happy. We'd be sisters -- and we could cosplay too ♪ But, when I was in elementary school, I never would've thought we'd all become school idols together like this. If you think about it like that, μ's gives off the feeling of group of 9 sisters. The reliable older sister-like third years and the cute younger sister-like first years. Somehow, I feel like us second years who are right in the middle get the best of both worlds here, right? ♡



5. Hanayo and Rin (19 pages)

TRANSLATION PROGRESS: 3/19

Last update: 10/30/2017

[Ka - yo - chin! Let's go to school ♪]

It was morning, and when I heard Rin-chan's shout from the direction of the garden, I hastily got up from the table where I was having breakfast.

Rin-chan always wakes up early.

It's really surprising how it's already been more than ten years since I've been hearing this voice in the morning.

Since μ's started doing morning practice, it's become even earlier, and I always find myself frantically shoving one last bite of breakfast into my mouth.

In hurry, I rushed out from the entrance way.

[Ah, there's some rice stuck to your cheek nya☆]

Rin-chan took the small rice grain stuck to my cheek and, aaah, she ate it---

[Today's breakfast was a rice bowl with egg and bonito flakes! Did I get it right nya?]

My face turned bright red in embarrassment---

Rin-chan and I are childhood friends.

Our houses are close, our ages are the same, we went to the same school together, and we were always, always in the same class.

How should I say it... Rin-chan and I have always, always been raised together as kids in this city with declining population at a small, small school where every grade has no more than 1 class.

That kind of story is probably surprising for non-locals but, you know, staying with 1 class isn't too bad either, you know?

Since there was only 1 class, everyone in the class has become really good friends with everyone else.

Since there was only 1 class, there were a lot of events with students from other grades so the number of people we knew from different years increased.

Since there was only 1 class, we haven't had to change classes even once, so we've been able to stay with the others the entire time.

The teachers included, everyone gives off the feeling of being close. I think it's one of the good points that only comes with a small school.

Especially for timid people like me, that way of doing it gives a little peace of mind.

When I see other big schools outside our area which have however many classes per grade, somehow, I get overwhelmed. I always think it's amazing.

In a school with that many students, everyone is able to carve out their own place and proactively do all kinds of activities.

For me, I'd be too scared and definitely wouldn't be able to do that, is what I end up thinking.

Really, everyone is amazing.

If I was in a school with that many students attending, with just that I'm sure my heart would be pounding, I'd be shaking and falling all over the place, forgetting things and breaking some sort of important thing or another --- that seems likely.

Ah, but don't misunderstand me, okay!

No matter how much I talk about this and being raised in a small, close-knit school in Akihabara, don't think all the other kids from Otonoki Elementary and the area in general are this negative and timid!

In μ's, there are 6 members from Otonoki Elementary.

Honoka-chan, Umi-chan, and Kotori-chan, the three second years. Rin-chan and me, the first years. And finally Eli-chan, the only one of the third years, also went to Otonoki Elementary. Eli-chan, the student council president, stood out since elementary school. She had a good head on her shoulders. When everyone in the grade sang together as part of a chorus, she always took on the role of conductor. She was always so serious and proper. She seemed like the type of person who could do anything no matter what school she ended up going to as the student council president or something similar.

And then the second year trio, sure, they're childhood friends, but the three of them also had very distinct, individual personalities and stood out in their own way. They had their own circumstances at home and their own hobbies, how should I say it I wonder ---- they made their feelings and what they wanted to do clear¹⁵. The three of them were really good friends, but they

¹⁵ 3人とも自分のしたいことや気持ちがとてもはっきりしてて. Unsure

had a lot of other friends as well, and it seemed like they'd be perfectly fine even if they were by themselves. They're really amazing people.

And finally, there's Rin-chan from the same grade as me. She's always energetic and has exceptionally good reflexes and motor skills. She tends to finish her meals first and has a good grasp of fundamentals --- Normally, at a glance, it doesn't look like she's thinking about much when in reality she's thinking things through properly. Before I knew it, she found her way into the middle of the class with everyone else. Even if it wasn't a small school like Otonokizaka, I think she'd probably be able to do the same thing. With her energy, I'm sure that she'd be able to make friends with anyone, no matter who they are, and enjoy life the way she wants, no matter where she is.

That's why, it's just me.

I'm always sulking like this, never able to say the things I want to say well.

I'm slow and no-good person who's always messing up.

That's why

♡♪☆ μ's

